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**Proceedings of the 1979 Clinic
on Library Applications
of Data Processing**

Papers presented at the
1979 Clinic on Library Applications
of Data Processing, April 22-25, 1979

The Role of the Library in an Electronic Society

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Editor

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Introduction

The sixteenth annual Clinic on Library Applications of Data Processing was held at the Illini Union, University of Illinois, April 22-25, 1979. This conference differed somewhat from its predecessors. Instead of focusing on library automation per se, we chose to look at various manifestations of electronic communication in the world around us (including electronic publication, computer conferencing and electronic mail), to consider present and probable future capabilities of electronic processing and, most importantly, to study the implications of these developments for libraries and librarians. The altered character of this particular conference caused it to differ from its predecessors in another way: most of the papers in 1979 were presented by leaders in fields outside of librarianship itself.

There is a third way in which the 1979 meeting differed from those that went before it. It was planned to dovetail with, and to form an integral part of, an ongoing research project relating to the impact of a "paperless society" on the research library of the future. This project, funded by the National Science Foundation, Division of Information Science and Technology, was conducted by the Library Research Center of the Graduate School of Library Science in the period September 1978 to February 1980. The scenario incorporated within the final paper of these proceedings was distributed to the conference participants in order to gain their reactions and inputs.

Although other conferences have dealt with the future of the library, this may be the first to focus on the library within the context of technological developments in publishing and related facets of human communication. I hope that the papers presented stimulate further thought, within the profession and beyond, on the implications for libraries of the evolution

from a largely paper-based society to a society whose communication channels will be largely electronics-based.

I would like to thank Laura Drasgow, Ellen Marks, and Richard Blue for serving on the planning committee for the 1979 clinic.

F. WILFRID LANCASTER

Editor